

More Affordable Rental Housing Available in Baton Rouge Thanks to \$28.8 Million Gustav/Ike Recovery Investment

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Baton Rouge, La. -- Part-time student Kayla Thurman says her place at the Belt Line Townhomes is a perfect fit for her and her

11-month-old son, Levi.

"It is very spacious, and it's so helpful not to have maintenance issues because everything is new," said Thurman, a junior majoring in Computer Science and Mathematics at LSU and a member of the National Guard. "It's great that I can plan to stay here for the next few years and don't have to worry. I can just focus on school and my son."

Belt Line is one of 13 affordable housing developments – providing 969 rental units, 938 of which offer affordable rates – that have been constructed or refurbished throughout East Baton Rouge Parish through \$28.8 million invested by the State of Louisiana for recovery from hurricanes Gustav and Ike. The investments are Community Development Block Grant funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, administered by the state Office of Community Development – Disaster Recovery Unit and managed by the Louisiana Housing Corporation.

"We have had a good working relationship with HUD and OCD-DRU, and we appreciate the investment of Community Development Block Grants in East Baton Rouge Parish. All of the agencies working together have helped provide affordable rate housing to stabilize families and give children a safe and solid foundation in which to thrive," said **Mayor-President Melvin L. "Kip" Holden**. "These grants truly make a difference in the lives of families."

Affordable rental rates allow families to spend no more than 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities, which is the rate at which families are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording other necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care.

OCD Executive Director Pat Forbes said, “The Baton Rouge region was hit hard by Hurricane Gustav in 2008, while it was still adjusting to population growth as a result of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. These investments have provided nearly 1,000 units of safe, affordable housing for residents who may not otherwise be able to have a place of their own. Investments like this drive our recovery and make our communities more resilient.”

Two of the developments – 438 Main and The Elysian Apartments – received the Baton Rouge Growth Coalition’s “Good Growth Award” earlier this year, which honors developments that raise the bar in Baton Rouge by applying smart growth principles and finding interesting ways of reusing existing properties.

“There are many East Baton Rouge Parish residents who have to use a large portion of their monthly income making rent payments,” said **LHC Executive Director Frederick Tombar, III**. “Developments like the Elysian, 438 Main and others help provide affordable housing options for individuals who are burdened with high rental costs. Rental affordability is one of the most urgent housing challenges we have in Louisiana, and the LHC is committed to expanding affordable rental opportunities across the state.”



Kayla Thurman relaxes in her living room at the Belt Line Townhomes, which were built with \$1.4 million invested through the State Affordable Rental program.

Belt Line Townhomes, The Elysian Apartments and One Stop Homeless Services Center and Housing were constructed in collaboration with Gulf Coast Housing Partnership, a real estate development company that works in partnership with nonprofit, government and for-profit entities to create safe, healthy and affordable housing for low- to moderate-income working families and individuals, persons with special needs, seniors and the homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless.

“The OCD-DRU Gustav/Ike recovery funds have been instrumental to Gulf Coast Housing Partnership in advancing three award winning Baton Rouge developments. With quality housing affordably secured, our residents can focus on expanding personal and family opportunities for on-going success,” said **Kathy Laborde, president and CEO of GCHP**. “With the support of Gustav/Ike recovery funds, GCHP leveraged more than \$31 million in community development resources for Baton Rouge, creating 168 units of workforce housing and advancing Baton Rouge’s 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness with the development of the One Stop Homeless Services Center & Housing.”

Of the 13 developments, 12 have completed construction. The Elm Street Apartments, funded through East Baton Rouge Parish’s Affordable Rental program, is expected to be complete by January 2015. A complete list of the developments, units and funding can be found below.

Four of the 13 developments were funded with \$8.8 million through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit “Piggyback” program, through which low-interest loans are awarded to developers who “piggyback” the CDBG money with other funding sources to create mixed-income housing. The program is modeled after the successful Piggyback program run by OCD-DRU in parishes affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The State Affordable Rental program contributed \$16.9 million to five complexes, while East Baton Rouge Parish's Affordable Rental allotment of \$3 million funded four developments and supplemented the funding of the One Stop Homeless Services Center, which received Piggyback dollars, and The Elysian Apartments, which received State Affordable Rental funds.

Name of Development	Funding Source	Funding Amount	Total Units	Total Affordable Units
438 Main Street Apartment Homes	State ARP	\$3,500,000	22	17
The Elysian Apartments	State ARP	\$4,000,000	100	75
	Parish ARP	\$841,100		
The Gardens Senior Apartments	State ARP	\$4,000,000	55	55
Belt Line Townhomes	State ARP	\$1,400,000	32	32
Greenwood Homes	State ARP	\$4,000,000	50	50
One Stop Homeless Services Center and Housing	Piggyback	\$500,000	36	36
	Parish ARP	\$158,900		
Mallard Crossing Apartments	Piggyback	\$4,186,023	192	192
Woodcrest Apartments	Piggyback	\$2,250,000	48	48
Renaissance Gateway Apartments	Piggyback	\$1,940,000	208	207
Autumn Place Apartments	Parish ARP	\$500,000	42	42
Willow Creek Townhomes	Parish ARP	\$500,000	42	42
Bayou Ridge Apartments	Parish ARP	\$500,000	82	82
Elm Street Apartments	Parish ARP	\$500,000	60	60
Total		\$28,776,023	969	938

The Disaster Recovery Unit within the Office of Community Development is dedicated to helping Louisiana's citizens recover from hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike and Isaac. As the state's lead for long-term disaster recovery, OCD-DRU manages the most extensive rebuilding effort in American history, working closely with local, state and federal partners to ensure that Louisiana recovers safer, stronger and smarter than before.